DEMOCRATIC ORTHODOXY

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Democratic Christianity:

SOME PROBLEMS OF THE CHURCH IN THE DAYS JUST AHEAD

BY

FRANCIS J. McCONNELL

Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church

Social Christianity
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FOREWORD

MANY books have been written to show the influence of Christianity on the various movements toward democracy which have become increasingly significant in the world since the outbreak of the Great War. It would be indeed difficult for the least discerning vision to miss seeing the marks of that influence. When the Founder of Christianity declared it to be the duty of every man to love God with all his life he spoke into the existence of the individual that inalienable dignity which is one of the pillars of democracy. By that declaration every man has value in the sight of God, and the love of every man is sought by God. When we think of the Protestant Reformation as an impulse toward democracy we are apt to think especially of the degree to which that Reformation placed the individual in the central place as the object of the divine care, and placed upon the conscience of the individual the responsibility for whole-hearted service of God. It has been said of Calvin that his greatest achievement was in forcing the individual person to see that he stands alone in the presence of God. But the very thought that a man can stand alone in the presence

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of God makes for a realization of the value of every man.

When the Founder of Christianity declared it further to be the duty of every man to love his neighbor as himself he set up another pillar of democracy. If the first utterance puts upon the separate life a great dignity the second ennobles all impulses toward closer fellowship among men. All that is needed to keep this double doctrine back of the democratic movement as a compelling force is an insistence upon the duty of bringing more and more of the acts of the individual under the conception of divine service and more and more persons under the term neighbor. The efficacy of the religion of Jesus in such progress is beyond all question.

While the indebtedness of democracy to Christianity has been abundantly recognized there is not such plenteous recognition of the obligation of Christianity to the spirit of democracy itself. Of course it is permissible to say that the spirit of democracy itself is one of the manifestations of the Christian spirit. It may be well then to make our problem more definite by thinking of the influence of the democratic forces upon organized Christianity. We have in mind the tasks of to-day as they confront the Christian Church. To what extent are these tasks set by the currents which make toward increasing social control? What must the Church say and do to make herself a real part and force in a world in which democracy is the charmed word? What

changes in the Church itself are already being hinted at in the signs of the times?

It does not require any interpretation by philosophers or historians or statesmen to convince us that the present war has at heart to do with a world-wide advance of democracy. The optimists who assure us that a social millennium is just at hand are very likely wide of the mark: but on the other hand no institution will come out of this war in the same form in which it went in — and the changes will almost certainly be away from everything suggestive of autocracy and toryism. A gloomy publicist in England has recently warned us against large hopes for democratic gains in the near future. From the fact that leaders who are now talking of large social advances have fought all such advances in the past this publicist deduces that the talk is insincere. But democratic speech on the part of hitherto conservative leaders is capable of another interpretation. It may represent a sincere change of heart; or it may come out of a desire to get an anchor to windward in the coming storm. Even if such advocacy of marked social change is insincere however — even if the forces of re-action are marshaling themselves for self-defense as never before, the marks of the control of the people will be upon every social institution henceforth as never before. The conflict is a conflict of peoples — and the peoples who have passed through the fires of the battle will never turn back to the former day. A group of military or po-

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litical or industrial rulers here and there may enjoy for a brief while the indulgence which comes from services rendered in the days of war, but there will be no mistaking or withstanding the mighty tides which rise in the hearts of masses of men. Those tides will play — are already playing — about the Church. Can we foresee,— or guess — any of the effects? We believe more and more that the Church is a veritable organism and that the life that pulses in her is essentially divine. The divineness, however, must show itself in a power of adaptation to the changes in the times. A living organism indeed shows itself alive by its power to impress itself upon its environment, but it shows the power not by an uncompromising fight with the environment but by adaptations and reactions in which the organism may be profoundly modified. The divine life in the Church is suggested quite as much by the changes in herself in the periods through which she passes, as by the stamp which she sets upon those periods.

And what of method? What better method can there be than that of listening to the questions which men are asking about the Church, and of heeding the plain implications of the questions they are asking about other institutions. Better for the Church to catch the import of these implications herself before she becomes a direct target of questionings. Is autocracy or aristocracy or paternalism any more lovely in an ecclesiastical organization than in a

political or industrial system? Is a belief which misses the great human values likely to be tolerated in a church after such creeds are cast out of secular circles?

The suffering through which men are passing in these terrible days adds an unwonted directness to their questionings. These are not times of slow and careful logical advance from one interrogation to the next. Experience with those who stand at the vortex of the conflict shows that the questions — as, for example, those of soldiers near the front — indicate a lightning-like leaping over intermediate steps. A formally logical method of dealing with this theme of democratic Christianity might call for a beginning with the democratization of a church organization as a first and immediate step. Thence we might travel to the Church's message for the social life of the times. Finally we might come to the essential belief of the Church about God and destiny. The thinking of the man in the street or the soldiers in the camp or trench moves much more directly than this. The very first question is likely to be: What about God? Where is He? What are we to think of Him? After these questions we can ask about the Church and specific messages for particular situations. Let us start then with the question — How shall we think of God as society rushes on toward vast democratic reorganization?

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DEMOCRATIC CHRISTIANITY

I

THE GOD OF LIBERTY, EQUALITY AND FRATERNITY

An instructive story is told near the old-time haunts of Andrew Jackson in Tennessee, of an encounter nearly a hundred years ago between a Calvinist theologian and a politician who had drunk deeply of the wine of Jacksonian democracy. According to the narrative an extreme Calvinist was holding forth to an audience on the sovereignty of God — maintaining that God had of His own choice called some souls to eternal life and had destined others to eternal death without any opportunity for human freedom whatsoever. As the argument came to its climax the politician was on his feet in mighty protest. "The argument may be logical enough," avowed he, "but in this day of democracy the people will never stand such decrees."

While the theologians of a former day would probably think of this criticism of the politician as

irreverent to the verge of blasphemy we of to-day would be inclined to second the politician. If the New Testament means anything it means that God is of such nature as to be worthy of the free service of men. God is set before us as reconciling men unto Himself — as winning their respect and love. There is no irreverence whatsoever in saying that in the end men will everywhere vote for God. To let our fancy play for the moment suppose the throne of the universe were to be filled by the suffrages of mankind. What kind of being would be elected God? In a sense it may be said the aim of the Christian movement is to bring men to the place where they will accept God as revealed in Christ not because they are compelled, but because they are won.

The Dismissal of the Absolutes

How then must we think of God whom men are freely to crown Lord of All? If present-day tendencies are to give us any clew we cannot think of God as Absolute in the old sense. The only absolutes we can respect are the absolutes of the moral realm. We are in protest against absolutism in rulers. The call of men to-day is for a limited God — or at least for a God who comes close enough to the affairs of this distracted earth to feel the pressure of the burden upon men. The God so Absolute that He could not come into any

vital relation to a limited world lest in the relation He Himself become limited and lose His absolutism is not the God for the times in which we find ourselves. What winsomeness could we find in a Divine Being who could dwell apart from the suffering of the world to-day? It is not a mere coincidence that along with the recent growth of the democratic idea there has gone a tendency to insist upon the need of so thinking of God as to bring Him closer to the streams of human life. We can see one indication of the intimacy between theology and democracy in the doctrine of the divine immanence. While much of the objection to a transcendent God is mistaken and even trivial yet the reason for the emphasis on the immanent God is clear enough. Men are eager to get God near. They prefer a God at work in the slime and ooze of things to one who sitteth afar off. For a time the doctrine of divine immanence was in danger of wrecking itself in a pantheism which would make all things alike divine. The pressure here came largely from the desire to get a God close at hand. Moreover this pressure has made itself felt not only in the general conceptions of immanence but also in such distinctive and original systems as that of Henri Bergson and that of William James. Bergson finds the moment of quick intuition in a real struggle the most truly divine. When James was protesting against the Hegelian absolutism in the work of Josiah Royce he declared

that his protest arose from a desire to find a living God — the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. We have only to glance at the pages of H. G. Wells to see a late manifestation of this same eager desire. Mr. Wells's God is little short of a scandal to the formal theologian — and the theologian's horror is at points entirely justified — but Mr. Wells is seeking a God who is at least alive, and in such a search the theologian is not always the best guide.

The Limited God

Lest this search for a limited as over against an absolute God seem to open the flood-gates to dreadful heresies, we hasten to remark that the Absolute God of the philosophers is not the God of the New Testament. The stoutest champion of the omnipotence of God, for example, need not be dismayed at remark about the limitation of God. The most orthodox teachers have spoken of the self-limitation of God. The instant God begins a work of creation He must limit Himself to one course rather than another, if His work is not to be a series of capricious freaks. If God creates a free man He limits himself by that gift of freedom. The schools have from the beginning told us that in the incarnation God has assumed very marked limitations — and this on any theory of incarnation. All the modern movement calls for is that we shall get God down from a distant circle of the heavens and

into the affairs of men. It is a problem not of a new conception but of a new emphasis. Nothing catastrophic will happen to any reasoned and reasonable theology worth the name, but God must be brought nearer to men.

Power and Responsibility

God must be brought nearer to men not merely for the sake of men but for the sake of God Himself — for the sake of a worthy ideal of God. The social thought of the time puts together indissolubly power and responsibility. It is manifestly unjust to hold a person responsible where he has no power; but it is altogether out-of-date in social thinking to concede to any person power without responsibility. Now no matter how much the philosophical treatises have dealt with the justice of God, the fact is that popular thinking has too often gone on the assumption that God is irresponsible. Useful as was the conception of the divine right of kings as an instrument establishing a place for earthly rulers as against encroaching papacy, the condemnation of the notion was the assumption that a divine right meant a right to do as one pleased. The "divine" rights have too often been those which could not be brought under any restraint of responsibility. Unfortunately this suggestion of irresponsibility lurks too close to much thought of the divine government of the world. We may say

that God can do as He pleases, that if we once know His will that ends all discussion, that things are so because He says so. Only the foolhardy would deny the truth in these statements, but such statements after all carry the flavor of irresponsibility. Whereas the plain implication of the scriptural revelation seems to be that God is the most deeply obligated being in the universe — obligated to that moral law which is the expression of what He is — obligated in a way even to the men whom He has created. Christian sentiment seizes upon Abraham's question: "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" as one of the highest peaks of Old Testament revelation both for what God is and for what men dare to demand.

Two philosophers were once discussing together the problem of human tragedy in the world. One asked the other, "Do you believe God could have made this world if He had known how it would come out?" The other replied, "Do you believe God could have made this world if He had not known how it would come out?" The second had the profounder moral insight. To have created a world like this without knowing what was to come of it would have argued moral irresponsibility in the Creator. What power can compare in its fateful possibilities with the power of creating human souls? No man who comes into the world is asked whether he will come or not. Every one of us is drafted into the life here. We are granted a fear-

ful boon of freedom: but is the user of the freedom to act only with a sense of responsibility and not the grantor of the freedom? The only relief here is in faith in the inseparable union of power and moral responsibility in God. We cannot be satisfied with less in a powerful God than we would expect in a powerful man.

God and the War

To get a glimpse at the uncertainty with which we handle the responsibility of God, think for a moment of some things which have been said about God's relation to the vast catastrophe of the present war. One group of believers, anxious to preserve a pure ideal of God, will have it that the Almighty has no relation to the present conflict whatever. It is hard to tell just what such utterances mean. If God is only a spectator of the affairs of men He can hardly be the God of the Bible. Very likely such utterances are just burning protests against involving God in the wicked schemes of men. But God has had to deal with wicked schemes ever since the coming of man. We can not add much to a correct thought of Him by lifting Him out of touch with men. Another group of believers speak as if they thought the Almighty was somehow taken by surprise in the closing hours of July, 1914, and that He has been plunged in more or less impotent grief ever since. But it does not honor God to assume

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such surprised helplessness. If, on the contrary, He was not taken by surprise He must as a wise ruler have provided resources to bring good out of the evil. If the Creator is to work with men, He must work with them as they are. It would indeed be blasphemy to avow that war is God's method of progress, in the sense that God prefers such a method. But it is not blasphemous to say that in the divine order war may come as a necessary instrument in a given situation. Either we must believe this or hold practically to an irresponsible God. The responsibility of God in the face of a world war is a conception loaded with the most dangerous possibilities for human intellects. But the possibilities of such a conception are not so dangerous as those of the irresponsibility of God. The only method by which we can commend the Christian idea of God to the millions now struggling in a deadly conflict is to preach that the struggle means more for God than for any one else, that a man battling for the right is battling for God's cause, that God must do His part to bring about a worthy outcome. God must be fair in His dealings with men.

Justice and Love

Why, however, is it necessary in these democratic days to lay such stress on the elementary virtues of a sense of responsibility and of fairness in declaring good news of God when we have the full gospel of

love of God? Simply because so much preaching fails to emphasize that the love of God rests down upon these primary bases. If the "plain man" has to choose between justice without love and love without justice he will take justice without love. There is a deep philosophy in the cry of the less favored classes in modern society for more justice and less philanthropy. We must have a God whom we can respect as well as love, and who respects as well as loves us. It seems a sacrilege against human nature to say so, but human love is at times so partial and doting and capricious as to be only a travesty when taken as a gleam of divine love. The divine love must be established in reason and justice if it is to win the masses of mankind.

Liberty, Equality and Fraternity

The great words of modern history, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," must be expressive of the divine purpose toward men if we are to take the Christian revelation for its obvious intent. If the obligation is upon men to move toward larger liberty, equality and fraternity, the obligation is upon God to help in the movement. And the Christian interpretation of liberty means, first of all, a chance for every man. That ranges God on the side of every movement, of whatever sort, which really gives men a fairer chance. It is here, by the way, that the democratic impulse comes in to the shaping of

the doctrine of personal immortality. In face of the fact that very few persons to-day even try to prove immortality by scientific test, the belief nevertheless persists in the thought of the masses. And this persistence seems to come not merely out of desire to live on but out of feeling that men ought to have their chance. Taking the world over and the ages through, the majority of men have died without their chance. They have been too poor. They have been too ignorant. An aristocratic heaven — a heaven for a favored few — would be intolerable in a just universe. Immortality must be a mass movement as of a gulf-stream, not the trickle of a few personal consciousnesses through eternity. A foremost American theologian, of very definite and fixed notions as to eschatology, confessed that his theories of heaven and hell had been knocked to splinters by a trip through India. There is a legend to the effect that Abraham Lincoln was once discussing in a private circle the problem of personal survival of death. One of the circle was arguing for conditional immortality. Some persons, said the reasoner, attain such moral worth that by the sheer force of moral momentum they outlast death, while others fall away into non-existence. Lincoln is said to have remarked, "Immortality is for all or for none." Whether the great democrat spoke thus or not, the sentiment is entirely democratic. An easy-going amiability which would give all men the same blessed eternity without regard to moral desert would be morally inadequate,

but a callous indifference which would allow the vast majority to sink into nothingness without a chance could not be the spirit of the God of the Scriptures.

The God of the Fair Chance

But we are writing primarily of the present life. We must believe in the God of the fair chance for men here and now — the chance to find those laws of life the adjustment to which means the largest liberty — laws which are the expressions of God's own life — and mastery of which means communion with Him. Progress in Christian liberty can only mean increasing voluntary assumption of higher and higher laws. But the search must be really the movement of the free spirit. A kingdom of God composed of those not freely consenting to the laws of the kingdom would hardly be a democracy. No hope of merely external rewards, no subtle inner determinism, can be the compelling forces in building a kingdom of God.

Is God Paternalistic?

While, however, men must have divine help in the free search for life, they must not have too much help. In getting rid of the autocratic God, we must not set up a paternalistic God. The growing independence of the soul must be respected. The individual must be given a chance to make his own

blunders. It is indeed comforting to think of ourselves as children of God: there come moments in every life when such comfort is unspeakably precious. The world's rough hand knocks us about as if we were indeed infants of very tender years. But this is not all of experience. In other words, we may well think of ourselves not merely as children of God but as sons of God — with choices and wishes which the Father is bound to respect. If this means that we make blunders, it also means that the Father is patient with the blunders until the lessons are learned. The father in the parable is spoken of as having two sons — not two children. The younger son made a bold request, but the father granted it, and then waited patiently for the outcome. The picture of the father gazing down the road for the return of the son whom he would recognize by the old familiar features is not altogether warranted by the text. The suggestion seems rather to be that the father waited for and finally hailed a figure whose changed bearing meant a changed life. He who looks for paternalism in God will not find it in Luke's great parable.

What is Equality?

And God is the God of equality. Only the equality is not that of mere quantitative equivalence of persons. Modern social tendencies sometimes look toward a leveling of persons into sameness. The

only equality worth any society's seeking for is an equality in which every man deserves the respect of every other because each is rendering an indispensable service — the equality of St. Paul's figure of the Body of Christ. In one sense it is absurd to ask if an eye is equal to an ear. But it is not absurd to say that eye and ear are equal in that each is an indispensable element in a complete body. If modern social equality tends to make men all alike, it strikes at the worth of each separate unit. In a million units all alike no one has great worth. In a million units each distinctive, something more than a millionth is lost if one drops out. The figure of the crowd must be replaced by the figure of the body.

Fraternity

Or, rather, all figures of speech must give way to the fact of men as together parts of a divine family. Liberty, equality, fraternity — and the greatest of these is fraternity, when the fraternity bases itself on the idea of the Fatherhood of the God of Jesus. If we wish to realize how necessary the Fatherhood of the New Testament God is to the fraternity which all great revolutions take as their watch-cry, let us ask ourselves what fraternity would be like if we were brothers together just in the sense of being the common offspring of blind forces. The foundation of fraternity would be then the darkness of a night in which all men would

look alike, or the common misery which would be the lot of all. Assuming genuine fellow-feeling in such fraternity, about all that could be accomplished would be the more or less temporary alleviation of the general misery. Fraternity would be mutual protective association. It would be the impulse of the herd to huddle together in a storm. Whereas the significant advances toward more closely knit social organization imply a positive and worthful end to be gained by intelligent and sympathetic coöperation. And these assumed or half-assumed or unconsciously groped-for ends, in the last examination, rest down upon conceptions of God and the world.

The God of liberty, equality and fraternity does not have to be forced into the Scriptures by arbitrary intellectual violence or drawn out by forced exegesis. He is plainly upon the face of the pages. To be sure, men have always taken the spirit of their own times as interpreting the spirit of God. If the rulers have been despots, God has seemed a despot, to be obeyed in fear and trembling. If the social organization is feudal, certain feudal elements appear in theology. We may rejoice that our own time is calling forth into light those qualities which win the free assent of men as the qualities most truly divine.

God revealed in Christ — or the Christ-like God — has been the chief theme of Christian students of all ages. The clearest note in all discussion has been that which sounds the love of God. We repeat that this note can be kept clear for social progress only

as the love is kept profoundly moral. It is the fashion nowadays to relegate creedal statements as to atonement in Christ to the classrooms of professional theologians, but some common aspects of these great phrasings should be more often brought out into full view. For example, all the more important theories of the redemptive work of God in Christ speak of an "objective" phase in the redemption of the Cross. Without regard to details of doctrinal construction we can easily discern the urgent purpose in this emphasis on the "objective." Men were seeking to guard against making God's work for the race merely a "subjective" or personal affair. They were aiming to link God's work into certain great moral necessities, to prevent its being a merely personal expression of feeling. We are not here concerned with the inconsistencies into which the dogmatists fell as they tried to work the thought through, but the essential purpose is clear and sound. There are inescapable laws for both God and man, and the work of Christ is in harmony with those laws. Criticize some of the theories as out-of-date if we please, but we must concede that in trying to found the work of Christ in holy and loving devotion to fundamental moral verities, the theories were making against those arbitrary irresponsibilities which would be out of place in a kingdom of God which men could respect.

The Rainbow Around the Throne

The Book of Revelation abounds in gorgeous imagery when it speaks of the throne of God. The throne of God is white with perfect justice. There is a rainbow over the throne. The difficulty with thrones has always been to keep them white and to keep a rainbow over them. It is not by accident that before this throne of God, white with justice and lighted by the rainbow of a promise that its power could not be misused, there stood a great multitude that no man could number of every kindred and people and tongue.

II

THE CHURCH OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE

Out of the French Revolution, which set the cause of human welfare ahead by a vast stride, came the watch-word: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Out of the American Civil War came another compelling word: "Government of the people, by the people, for the people." Utterances like these are more than the phrasings of individuals. They are voices of the people themselves — veritable tests and standards for any institution claiming to be in the deep sense popular. Can we say of the Church as an organized social institution that it is of the people, that it is controlled by the people, that it exists for the people?

Who Owns the Church?

The "plain man" often asks: Who owns the Church? Does it belong to the people? The church historian replies that the Church in the very beginning came out of the heart of the people — that the Scriptures were written in the language of the common

folk, that the early leaders were farmers and fishermen and tentmakers, that every great forward step of the Church has come out of response to popular opinion. The critic of present-day social institutions as they are, however, declares that the Church takes its stamp from the character of the times in which we live, that the era is predominantly capitalistic, and that the capitalistic spirit has captured the Church; that theology, ritual and organization are for the gratification and aggrandizement of privileged classes. Who owns the Church? Capitalism! Privilege! The Upper Class!

Now we must remember that this same charge can be brought — and is brought — against all other social institutions. It is not many years since a forceful author — a German appropriately enough — wrote to show that the State is essentially a predatory instrument contrived by the powerful to exploit the weak. How often do we hear that the family is an ingeniously devised piece of machinery to safeguard property interests? We are told that educational systems are maintained for the sake of the present industrial order, and that art has been from time immemorial the special object of the patronage of Privilege. All institutions take color from the era in which they live. He who thinks, however, that the hues of a particular era which tint or stain a great human institution express the whole truth about the institution is gifted with scant discernment. Let it be granted — just for argument's sake

— that the State is a tool for the protection of the strong. By their very familiarity with the processes of law and order which the State inaugurates and fosters the people themselves become strong and take possession of the tool. The family may indeed protect property interests, but it opens the windows to the divine. A great university may be founded with a reactionary spirit and with a president as the agent of a board of trustees of business men may be administered most autocratically and yet let loose swarms of radical questioners. It is a good deal as if a teacher should show a boy how to read with the expectation that the boy will continue to read only what the teacher approves of! And some of the artistic creations financed by privileged classes have caught most clearly the large passion for humanity which in the end sweeps privilege away.

And so with the Church. Christianity seems to be able to use almost any sort of instrument, or rather seems able to get the eternal truths about God and man uttered in spite of elements manifestly inadequate both in humanity and divinity. Christianity is light. It shines through the work of poor leaders and poor systems — yet with a rich result. By the simple fact that speech sometimes means more to the listener than to the speaker himself Christianity has made gains. It would be difficult to declare Christian truth at all without getting into it something of the eternal. Christianity belongs to all men: and reaches out to all men. Granting all that

can be urged as to the control of the Church by this or that class, the truth escapes all control and sounds the universal note. The Church belongs to all men — sometimes in spite of herself. Ownership is spiritual. The man who owns the house or the picture or the book in the sense of legal possession may not be the spiritual owner. The good and the true and the beautiful belong to him from which they call forth inner response.

The Church and Class Control

The social critic replies that all this sounds very fine, but that it does not really face the question as to class control of the Church. We must admit the seriousness of the question, especially in view of the evident inability of the Church to make strong impression on the laboring class of this country as that class finds expression through formal organization. A great deal of the blame for the present deplorable situation rests upon the trade unions but that cannot fully excuse the Church. The unions are often under the domination of the worse elements. But what has the Church done to encourage the leadership of the better elements? American labor has not shown the statesmanship of British labor in welcoming the coöperation of religious leaders. But how many American ecclesiastical leaders are trying to coöperate? The unions declare that in business matters the Church discriminates against organized

labor. But is not that sometimes true? The unions criticize pew-letting and the costliness of church music. But are these things so sacred as to be above criticism? There is no justification for dodging or ignoring serious criticism. But in spite of ground for real criticism, we do not believe the Church is class controlled. Individual congregations and even particular denominations may be predominantly under the sway of a particular set of men. But taking the churches together, numbering millions of adherents as they do, they represent the people, and are "of the people." Indeed, if one so chose, one might make a plausible argument that the Church in America is democracy run wild. With nearly one hundred and fifty different denominations, with the widest variety as to belief and organization, with the utmost ease in passing from the membership of one denomination to another, with no external compulsion in church support, with all churches resting upon the voluntary coöperation of adherents, the marvel is that American religion is not inveighed against as suffering from democracy in excess.

Nevertheless, the raising of the question as to "who owns the Church" should set every churchman to heart searching. When a class like organized labor seems to think that the Church does not in any sense belong to it, the Church should give itself no rest in the search for a message or a policy that shall make unmistakably clear that the Church belongs to all men. The really effective preacher

hears a member of his church say now and again: "That part of the sermon was mine. That I take as belonging to me." The Church as a whole is under obligation to put its leaders under the strain of seeking statements of truth or of policy so fundamentally human, so intellectually and emotionally effective that their appeal becomes inescapable except by deliberate refusal to listen. A truth is not mine till I make it mine; and I cannot make it mine until it is so put that I can take hold of it. Large general statements are not enough — even though we are dealing with those vast questions which concern all humanity. A shrewd Roman Catholic leader once remarked that the preacher's breaking the bread of life for his people is a problem of getting the pieces small enough for the people to take hold. Back of the whimsical humor there is a practical wisdom not to be despised. The Gospel is not preached to men until it is so stated that they can take possession of it. The Church does not belong to men until they feel that its program is their program, and that they can have some part in shaping the program. It will not suffice to approach a class of men of any sort with the sweeping statement that the Church belongs to all men. The Church must be more concrete, more specific.

We must not hurry away from the criticism that the Church belongs among the un-democratic agencies. Let us catch the full force of the fact that thousands of men think that while the Church may

have once been " of the people," its government today is certainly not " by the people "; that it claims to speak in the language of final authority; that it is so organized that it works from above downward; that it is by its very constitution a ready instrument for the hand of the ecclesiastical autocrat. Many — not a few — ask: How can the Church ever speak as the voice of the people? Are not " Church " and " Democracy " mutually contradictory? Would it ever be possible to make any such organization as the Roman Catholic Church democratic?

In face of the open and avowed opposition of the Roman Church to many great popular currents, the very question at first seems decisive. But a little reflection ought to show that any church organization is just an instrument, after all; and that a tool which has been used to send forces from above downward may conceivably be made to work in a reverse direction. As a matter of fact very capable students have insisted that there is no inherent contradiction between even the Roman organization and democracy. So long as we remind ourselves that we are thinking of what might be, rather than of what actually is, it will do no harm to reflect that the religious desires and will of millions of believers might work into effective expression through priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and a pope — if the hierarchy were delicately sensitive to and quickly responsive to the mighty currents of the

peoples' life. A leading American socialist has made the prediction in all seriousness that in the ultimate socialized order the Roman Catholic Church will take on new power. Of course this sounds like topsy-turvydom, but the remark is perfectly sober. While the Roman Church makes the largest claims to divine sanctions and to direct guidance from above, there is no church leadership with a subtler sense for the demands of practical, every-day necessities. Priestly authority and papal infallibility rest upon the assumption of immediate divine inspiration. Actually their efficacy is due to the fact that multitudes of men are so constituted psychologically that priestly help is real — the more real the more human the priest is — and to the fact that an office of last resort enables men to get some questions settled and to pass on to something else. If all this seems to the ultra-Protestant to be over-concession he need merely remember that there is nothing in the above putting of the Roman Catholic case that will be pleasing to the Roman Catholic. For with the Roman Church the emphasis is at present unmistakably on divine authority communicated to leaders responsible to that authority alone. But the mere form of organization does not reveal decisively whether an institution is democratic or not. Even a monarchy might conceivably be democratic in the sense of being immediately sensitive to and expressive of popular will.

Centralized Authority

Some form of centralized authority — secondary as this point may seem at first glance — is really very vital for democratic Christianity. Pure democracy — the democracy of the New England town meeting — is out of the question except in a town — and a small town at that. Democracy means not that every one shall have " his say " in actual speech, but that the will of the people shall come to expression. In any great popular organization some matters must be left to experts, and some to small groups — but the fundamental principles for which the organization exists must be so stated or so wrought into deed that the mass of the supporters feel the speech or the deed as their own. Now experience seems to teach that a vast popular impulse quite as often finds its way into satisfactory expression through a few mouth-pieces as through many. If the Church were predominantly a law-making body much might be said of the importance of organs of large numerical proportions. The Church however is more definitely prophetic and executive. In prophetic utterance and in executive performance the numerical bigness of the proclaiming or acting body may be a positive hindrance. " Councils of war never fight," say the soldiers, or if they do fight fail through lack of tight cohesiveness of plan. What a plight the United States would find herself in if she should turn over the executive functions to the

Congress — though this is not to say that the United States would not be better off if there were closer connection between the law-making and the executive organs.

A Word About Bishops and Union

We shall discuss a little later the question of church unity but call attention here to the fact that this very matter of centralized authority is the chief organizational stumbling block to the closer approach of the churches to an imperatively demanded consummation. The issue is raised in the question as to episcopacy. In England the Anglican and Non-Conformist find the episcopate obstructing the road to their closer union. The Rev. William Temple — quite possibly the ablest intellect in the younger circles of the Church of England to-day and one of the most socially minded spirits in all England — puts the case for the episcopacy thus: "Whenever the Bishop acts he acts as the instrument or organ of the entire Church throughout all time and all places — of the Church which is the Body of Christ. The divine origin of the Life offered to men by God through Christ in the Church will be forgotten unless the institutions of the Church perpetually suggest it." ("Issues of Faith," Page 27). It is to be observed that this phrasing keeps clear of the mystic and almost magic features which the more extreme churchmen sometimes give the episcopacy. The aim

is practical. The bishop is an "instrument" or "organ." The episcopacy has for part of its function to suggest "the divine origin" to minds prone to loss of memory. The Non-Conformist, on the other hand, affirms that the very word "Bishop" — especially when spelled with a capital — smacks of popery — that bishops tend to autocracy themselves and that they are against democracy. Any suggestions that they communicate to slow memories concerning the divine origin of the Life offered to men are more than likely to be offset by vivid recollections as to how bishops often vote in the House of Lords on measures deeply affecting the public welfare.

Let it be understood that we are using the English situation just for the purposes of illustration, and not for exhortation. Looked at from a distance there does not seem to be anything essentially impossible in the proposition that the two camps of believers get together in closer union so far as episcopacy is concerned, assuming a genuine desire on both sides for union. The non-episcopal bodies may well remember that in a great organization power must be centralized somewhere. This is all the more pertinent from the fact that one reason often urged for Protestant Christianity in England is the need of presenting a solid front to Roman Catholicism. In any event the Church has for its ideal an existence as a body — not as a loose assemblage of unrelated units. In a real organism there will be

organs of power, no matter what we call them.

On the other side the adherent of episcopacy should often remind himself that all notions of an especial sanctity in the bishopric should be resolutely cast out in so far as they suggest some mystic quality. The bishopric is a tool, to be judged as other tools are by their fitness to the tasks expected of them. If the bishop is an organ through which the Church speaks he should be steeped in the spiritual currents which run through the Church. Moreover since a prime postulate of democracy is the union of power and responsibility, whatever steps will keep alive in bishops a sense of responsibility should be determinedly taken. We emphasize the jurisdictional aspect of the episcopacy because that aspect seems destined to increasing importance, while the episcopacy as the channel of regularity in ordination means less and less in view of the practical success of ministers "irregularly" ordained.

The problem of episcopacy in American Churches does not play quite the same part as beyond the sea: though it constantly comes up in discussion of union. Here the instrumental character of the office is more evident. There is indeed objection to the office as undemocratic — often by persons who fail to see that some one must do the work which a bishop does. The executive may be called a chairman, or a secretary or a president — but the work has to be done if there is to be any large organic coöperation. Of course any governing body in a

church can take any steps it pleases to keep alive the sense of responsibility in bishops. They no doubt need all the help they can get, for the temptation is strong in a church office to identify one's own will with the will of God. One man suggests that bishops be given a fixed term, with no re-appointment or reëlection; but that prevents the people from continuing a bishop whose leadership they gladly follow, and forces them to retain through the fixed period one whom they inwardly repudiate: both of which results are undemocratic. Another suggests that bishops be subject to reëlection at the end of four or six year terms. That opens the door to the possibility of keeping bishops involved in ecclesiastical politics. Besides, with all due respect to American practice there is nothing especially democratic in the "term" idea anywhere. The more excellent way seems to be to get rid of the nonsense — "Once a bishop always a bishop" and provide for the quick retirement of a bishop when he ceases to be effective. This should be done by the governing assembly of a church by simple resolution if necessary, where questions of moral character are not involved. The doctrine that there is anything in an office to free a man from the most exacting scrutiny as to his discharge of his tasks should be fought against as a pestilent heresy. In all such debates we must keep our eyes open to actual realities. For example, a churchman recently proposed to strike at undemocratic forces in churches by call-

ing bishops by some other title — as superintendents or presidents or secretaries. Life is too short to spend time defending any title, but calling an office of power by one title or another does nothing to the power, apart from some legislative enactment. The more innocent sounding the title the greater may be the peril to the democratic interests. Some of the most powerful ecclesiastical leaders in America today — more powerful than bishops in that they have the handling of large church funds — go by the title of secretaries.

Democratic Preaching

But the functions of any and all officials acting as the agents of the people are secondary as compared to those of the prophets who proclaim the Gospel as the voice of the Church. In this day of emphasis on social organisms we must give due heed to the function of the Church herself in prophecy conceived as the proclamation of the truth. A body of men engaged together in the pursuit of truth may do better than the same number of men working absolutely apart from one another. This is true even in scientific pursuits. How much more true is it when the search is for religious insight on the part of groups of persons conceiving of themselves as the Body of Christ. As a simple illustration think of the effect of a congregation on the utterances of a preacher. There is something in the very fact that

hundreds of persons are listening together that makes it possible for each member of the congregation to catch the truth more quickly — and this atmosphere of receptivity exalts the power of a real preacher in a high degree. Imagine such an atmosphere of receptivity extended throughout a whole denomination and we have more than mere receptivity: we have a positive prophetic force. Furthermore, when masses of men act together in spiritual unison they unfold powers to which they do not attain as individuals. Of course there is no social consciousness apart from the consciousness of individuals. There is no social mind apart from the minds of the people who meet together in social contacts. But there are forms of consciousness which men achieve only as they act together. On the lower planes we see this consciousness prompting men to mob excesses of which no one would be guilty alone. These lower possibilities, however, are suggestions of higher possibilities. What appears on a lower level as mere crowd contagion may appear on a higher plane as the veritable breath of the Holy Spirit — for that Spirit must be more and more conceived of as the Force making for fellowship and communion.

The real preacher has for part of his function to gather up and express the meaning of these spiritual movements which stir the hearts of men. The people may not be able to frame the truth for themselves, but they recognize it as what has been stirring in their hearts as soon as they hear it pronounced.

William James speaks of men who have power to pull a trigger in the consciousness of other men, but this can only be done when the consciousness of men is loaded. The effective minister of the Church is he who can pull the trigger for Christian consciousness by a statement that releases the explosive or driving powers of that consciousness. Or we may recall Gladstone's description of the orator as the speaker who sends back upon his audience in showers what comes up to him from them in mist or spray. A large part of Christian prophecy consists in thus interpreting the consciousness of the whole Church to the Church itself. The true leader makes his people recognize his thought as truly their own.

The Leadership of the Expert

It would be easy to cavil at all this as the leadership of keeping one's ear to the ground. We are really thinking, though, of the leadership which keeps all the spiritual senses alert for the higher moods of the people. But this is not all. The Church leader is not one who expresses merely what may be in some sense in the mind of the people. Mr. H. G. Wells has recently insisted that in the new day of larger popular control which seems about to dawn there must be a *delegated* leadership in a more real sense than any which society has yet tried. This leadership implies not only the power to ex-

press the mind of the people, but the power also to command the confidence of the people as to win popular assent for what should be said or done even before the people fully understand the message or the measure. In other words there must be hearty acceptance of expert leadership by the large social groups. The expert must do what he knows ought to be done, in confidence that the people will at least suspend criticism until the larger results declare themselves. The world into which we are moving is so complex, is so full of possibilities making for sudden change, that even the Church leader can no longer act in leisurely fashion. Nor can we rely on the outworn assumption that for Church tasks "anybody will do." A socialist has recently discussed the type of church which would obtain if socialism were to come to complete success. The members of the church in a socialistic community would assemble in a service to hear one of their members speak on a spiritual theme. There would be no professional preacher. Any one of the members — preferably one of the older men — would be qualified to speak on the spiritual values. All this in the name of democracy! By the same token any one in that socialistic state would be about as well qualified as any other to deliver an address on socialism. No; democracy is not safe if it begins to disparage the expert. The Church leader must be expert in knowledge and expert in skill. There is a scientific aspect to Chris-

tian learning,— and scientists are experts. There is an artistic phase to the presentation of Christian truth — and artists are experts. There is a profound seer-like quality in Christian discovery and the seers are experts in long and patient brooding. And Christian leadership demands the degree of statesmanship which can be called by no other term than expert.

The Church For the People

The Church exists for the people. But all organizations have this for their original sin that they tend to become ends-in-themselves. Whereas from the Christian view-point only persons are or can be ends-in-themselves. The Church is an instrument, and the tool aspect of its organizational machinery must always be kept in mind. Creeds, Scriptures, Rituals, Offices — all are instruments to be used for the good of persons. Their sacredness comes of the uses to which they are put. They must not be allowed to get in the way of human needs. When Jesus gave his followers the parable of the Good Samaritan he seems to have had in mind the de-humanizing effects of institutions when they are allowed to become ends-in-themselves. The fault with the priest and Levite was that each had been institutionalized into a mere professional. Each was more of a priest or a Levite than a man. All through the career of Jesus runs this protest against

the tendency in the religious institutions of his day to become sacred in themselves. As we read the old Mosaic laws their aim at the purification and redemption of human life as such as is entirely clear. It is tragic to think of the distortion of perspective by which the later priests came to treat man as if man were made for the Sabbath and not the Sabbath for man. Yet the tragedy is always possible.

Again, if the Church is for the people it must as an institution be kept in such flexible condition as to adjust itself readily to changing human conditions. What a travesty it is to speak of the Church as a brake-system on the fast-moving life of our time! Brakes we no doubt need, but the Church of God is not to be forever pictured as stopping things or as holding them back. The Church enthrones and worships a Creator. How better worship a Creator than by showing a creative spirit? The Scriptures reveal a progressive movement. Is it conceivable that the movement was to come to a standstill at any stage in human affairs? To be sure the revelation in Jesus was made once for all, but the interpretation of that revelation goes on and on. The only adequate revelation of the truth in Jesus is the progressive incarnation of his truth and spirit not only in individuals here and there, but also in individuals knit together in closer and closer social relationships. And as the Body grows with the flight of the generations the institutional instruments with which the Body works and through which it ex-

presses Itself must become larger and more complex and better adapted to their purposes. To resist change in an instrument is sometimes to quench that Holy Spirit that is striving for a larger channel of outpouring upon the souls of men.

One or two words of caution may be in order. When we speak of ready adjustment to the use of the people we do not mean just the more work-a-day uses. Some utilitarian democrats criticize the great Gothic cathedrals as designed with no thought of public usefulness. Cathedrals were not indeed designed for the more matter-of-fact purposes, but their higher ministry is a benediction to all men. So in the most crowded business quarters of a great city nothing is lost if a distinctively churchly building bears its witness to the religious values. The more ordinary necessities are not all.

Again, the Church for the people must not identify the people only with the souls now alive. That may be permissible in an entirely secular organization but not in a church. For the Church does not recognize death except as an incident in unceasing life, and the Church means more by the communion of the saints than a communion here and now. The Church as a democracy is for the people now and here. It is also for the saints who have passed on — an instrument by which their saintly forces are conserved in an earthly institution. And the Church is for the people who are to come after in

that future toward which she strives. Thus the Church for the people asks a threefold question: Is the word or deed good for the people here and now? Does it carry on the good handed down from the saints of old? Does it make for the largest and best life of the future?

Church Union

It is impossible to close this section of the discussion without a word about the imperative necessity of closer union on the part of the Churches. The movements toward union have been accelerated by the Great War and the arguments for union have in the past four years taken on greater dignity. In an age of large business enterprise men thought of closer church union in terms of economy of money and energy. The suggestion was sometimes almost irresistible of trust magnates and amalgamating business concerns — closing down this plant and opening that for business reasons. Such reasons were good as far as they went when applied to church activities but they did not go the whole length. The abrupt plunge into the world catastrophe, however, revealed to Protestantism the appalling fact that she had no voice through which she could speak a single word authoritatively at a time of world crisis. Earl Grey is reported to have said that he thought that if Germany had yielded to

forty-eight hours more of discussion in those fateful days of August, 1914, the immediate crisis could have been safely passed. Without regard to whether Earl Grey's judgment as to this possibility is sound or not let us imagine the debate continued for forty-eight hours. Let us assume it desirable to have had the capitals of the world know the mind of Protestantism, not on questions of technical diplomacy but on the huge human issues involved. How would it have been possible for Protestantism as such to say or do anything in forty-eight hours? The saint may reply that it was the duty of every believer to pass the forty-eight hours upon his knees at such a crisis: but, surely, after such prayer some sort of utterance would have been necessary. Who would have spoken? Furthermore we are hearing it said that the voice of Protestant religion should be heard on the great human questions at the framing of the peace terms. But who can speak for all of Protestantism? No: the tragic fact is that Protestantism as such cannot say or do anything on one of the greatest questions that ever occupied the thought of man, in forty-eight hours, or forty-eight days, for that matter. We most fervently pray that there may never be another war like the present, but the war will leave behind it a host of world-wide perplexities which a world-wide Church ought to help relieve. In any event the present plight of the Churches cannot long endure.

Christian Federalism

A better understanding of the currents moving to-day toward the larger democracy would remove many of the objections stubbornly held against a more closely articulated Church. The democratic tendencies to-day move in the direction of federalism for the larger social masses: federalism as implied in Cole's Self-Government in Industry and as set forth in Laski's Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty. Federalism means simply that organizations perform apart and separately the functions that they can best perform thus; but that they be so closely related that they can do together the things that ought to be done together. It means both sub-division and union. No serious attention is likely to be paid to the conception of the Christian Church as one vast uniform mass, smothering down all differences and checking the rivalries out of which progress comes. In so far as denominational differences come from serious reasons seriously held there is no justification for doing away with them. The Church of Christ should present an impressive wealth of diversity. If the dweller in the Father's house does not feel at home in a particular room of doctrine or organization or ritual there is no reason why he should not step into another. If it be objected that nothing can interfere with a group's withdrawal or secession the answer is that the obvious benefits of the closer relationship will

make the career of separatist groups short-lived. If we are called on to face the fact that federalism involves more than association in a league — that it implies some unified organ over all — that every denomination accepting it must surrender some of its own prerogatives we reply that we do face that very fact: and that we must adjust ourselves to that fact or go on with diminishing effectiveness. If it is urged that when all this is done there will stand over against united Protestantism a united Romanism with a deep gulf between them we reply that we are taking one step at a time, and that the closer organization of Protestantism is the next step; and that if Protestantism is to have any beneficial effect on Romanism the benefits will be greater coming from a unified Church. If it is protested that a huge organization of this sort opens the door to ecclesiastical politics and autocracy we refuse to be alarmed so long as the organization represents a genuinely popular movement. The people are becoming more and more able to take care of themselves against politicians and autocrats. The Spirit of Christ is no doubt in the world. What that Spirit can accomplish for mankind will appear only when there is a Body of Christ with parts closely enough coördinated to prevent speech from stammering and progress from staggering.

III

THE PART OF THE CHURCH IN MAKING THE WORLD SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY

THE French Revolution gave to the world the phrase — Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The great victory from '61 to '65 for American Democracy reënforced the idea of government of the people, by the people and for the people. The mighty upheaval through which the world is now passing will likely always be characterized as the war to make the world safe for democracy. And after the conflict of arms passes there can be no discharge in the perennial struggle to keep the world safe for democracy. How can the Church help?

If what we have hitherto said is true one way the Church can help is to be a democracy herself — a shining exemplification of what a popular organism really is. There is no reason why she should not be a path-breaker in democratic experiment, a model and pattern for political and industrial societies. She should take the lead in breaking away from the old democracy of the pioneer and the frontier — the democracy of every man for him-

self and "devil take the hindmost" — the democracy which held the Presidency of the United States as a possible prize before every school-boy, and should preach the democracy of mutual aid. But there is more than this. As she stands in the world, and over against the world, she must prophetically proclaim the religious duties which make popular rule safe. For example she ought to make as the requisite for admission to her ranks the willingness to do the will of God in Christ-like service of men. As a matter-of-fact no other test of church-membership is really democratic. The one thing that every man can be sure of is his own determination to do the will of God. To ask a candidate if he is free from doubt or if he possesses a certain type of experience may plunge him at once into confusion. Men cannot stand on the same plane as to freedom from doubt. Some are by nature given to ready faith. Some are not abundantly furnished with the instruments of doubt. Others are by nature questioners. Some have not the temperament which lends itself easily to anything approaching the mystic in experience. Seers are born and not made. But every man can know whether his own will is set to do the will of God. Any man who takes a religious vow seriously will use all the aid of the "means of grace" — of prayer and meditation and worship — to strengthen his resolution, but the center of the religious life is that fixity of will which is within every man's reach. If we are to find a democratic

test for religious societies we shall have to find it here. The doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit is sometimes so presented as to cause very devout persons to doubt whether they have such a Witness. But there can not be much doubt as to the witness of one's own spirit in its relation to the Kingdom of God. And as of old the devotion to doing the will of God can only mean the service of man.

Exalting the Human Values

It is the duty of the Church to approach all the great debates of the time which have important consequences for human welfare, not necessarily as an organization of skilled debaters, but as an organism affirming the inherent worth and inalienable dignity of the human soul. Take the significance of the modern debate on the divine immanence for democracy. In some expositions the immanence of God means pantheism, and the pantheism is now and again avowedly proclaimed as a bulwark of democracy. All things and all men are phases of the divine activity. The race is a manifestation of the divine life. Human consciousnesses are the waves of a stirring sea. They rise in a mid-sea storm or break in a sunlit spray and then fall back into the great ocean. The sharp separateness of individuality is done away. In that all are parts of One and the Same a philosophic basis for democracy is claimed. Now with the philosophic doctrine of di-

vine immanence as such the Church has no quarrel. She welcomes the doctrine as veritably bringing God nearer to man — as doing away with a self-running "Nature." But she stands against any obliteration of the human life as dowered with self-determination and as marked with an inalienable dignity. Freedom and immortality mean much to her. When she battles for them she really battles for democracy. One way to make the world safe for democracy is to show that in dealing with human lives men are dealing with Eternal realities.

The Ethical Debate: Pacifism

Into the great ethical debates of the time, too, the Church comes not as a formal reasoner in moral philosophy but as a champion of human values to be cast into the scales of some debates for their own great worth as actual concrete facts. The questions as to social ethics to-day which engross the attention of men anxious to help their fellows are for the most part indeterminate on the plane of abstract argument. It almost seems at times as if there were only one absolute left in the realm of ethics — that being the absolute obligation to do right. But what the right is may depend upon a variety of factors all so relative as to time and place and circumstance that abstract reasoning has but little value. As an illustration we may refer to a problem made acute — especially in England — by the

war — the problem of the conscientious objector, or more particularly of the absolute non-resistant. Some hundreds — possibly thousands — of men have been sent to jail in the past four years for refusal to bear arms in war. Some critics of the Church who have never hitherto shown much interest in Christianity have declared that these prisoners are the only Christians in England; and some ministers of the Church have accepted this judgment and have upbraided the whole Church for defection from Christ in accepting the war. From the impassioned manner of the discussion one might think that prohibition of going to war under any circumstances was a part of a self-evident moral revelation. Ask one non-resistant why he will not fight and he replies that it is a sin to kill one's fellow-man. The voice of conscience is unmistakable. But suppose the fellow-man is himself killing others of our fellow-men. The non-resistant replies that his conscience is at perfect peace, and some observers declare that the Christian joy of the objectors is like the joy of the members of the early church. The argument on the other side takes the form of showing that the joy which attends a self-sacrificing surrender to conscience is no conclusive proof that the concrete commands of conscience are right. The agonized surrender of thousands of other persons to the necessity of war is not without its moral significance. The non-resistant may continue that he is only obeying literally the commands of Jesus. But

is he also obeying literally the commands of Jesus in other respects — as to property, as to lending, as to subordination of family interests, as to judging others? And is he certain that he is right in his interpretation of Jesus? Does the word as to a Good Shepherd's giving his life for the sheep mean that a good shepherd passively allows the wolves to devour him? Or, if the robbers had returned while the Good Samaritan was busy at his merciful task how best could the Samaritan have continued his work of neighborliness — by non-resistance or by fighting? Moreover how do we regard Jesus? Is Jesus just a man among other men? But Jesus is regarded by the Church as sustaining such a unique relation to God as to be the revelation of God to man. With such a conception of Jesus it is permissible to maintain that the non-resistance of Jesus shows the spirit of patience and love in which God carries on the universe. For if we start out to prove that God Himself is absolutely non-resistant we land in the bog. If the spirit of Jesus is the spirit of God we find the meaning of the non-resistance of Jesus in its revelation of the spirit in which God uses even the physical forces of the world. But God does not cease to use the forces. If finally the non-resistant declares that his own method is the only one that will break the evil will and win the love of man the reply may be appropriate that methods are not necessarily matters of immediate revelation.

The Relativity of Moral Questions

Now a debate like this could go on without end. The difficulty is with the element of relativity in the problem. One party in the Church holds with the non-resistant and the other finds against him: but neither party has the sure support of any absolutes. Each party may be completely desirous of doing right. But we will not debate forever. The immediate, determining reason is that we will not debate too long in the presence of inhumanity by wholesale. The people are dying here and now, and what can we do to help? Toward another kind of war the non-resistant might be right in his non-resistance. But facing just this kind of aggression at this particular time and place what is the best thing to do for humanity? It is with this question in mind that the Church has given her answer.

Some will no doubt say that when we put the practical question as to "what is the best thing to do for humanity" over against the absolute obedience to an abstract law we weaken the foundations of moral life. To which we must again say: Where are the abstract laws? And how can looking upon every social crisis as a challenge to do the very best possible for mankind weaken the moral fiber? Since so much of social obligation is relative is there not moral worth in striving to keep our social ethics at least up-to-date? Human values, more abundant life for men, the best possible for men as men —

these indeed may seem hazy as compared with a hard-and-fast set of rules, but it is with such conceptions as these that Democracy and Christianity work. We must not forget that economic and social sciences tend to erect laws into fixity without always regarding the human life affected by the laws. The demands of a human ideal in constant growth supply the tests by which the Church is to judge all social relationships. Enlarging human life — how vague it sounds! And yet how important for all the Church holds dear!

Socialism

In dealing with the so-called "social question" especially the Church must hold fast to the great back-lying ideas of human dignity and human worth. She does not pose as an expert in the details of social schemes of reorganization, but she does insist that every kind of social institution must be judged by the question as to the kind of man it produces. There is much missing of the point here. It is very easy for a church to imagine that because it is doing relief work twenty-four hours in the day and seven days in the week it is therefore helping in the solution of the social problem. Very likely help is being given. Where possible churches ought to be open for some forms of service literally all the time, but just "doing things" in this fashion lays the church open to the charge that it has ceased to func-

tion as a church and has become merely a relief agency, and that merely remedial work in any case does not get to the heart of the difficulty. If the Church cares to help in a great democratic movement, says the critic, let her come to grips with socialism, and declare what religion has to offer in regard to the socialist movement. The challenge is all the more pertinent from the fact that in some minds socialism becomes practically a form of religion, especially in the crusading fervor which it begets.

The first duty is to understand. Let the churchman get it clearly in his mind then that socialism is not a mere fad, or whim, or passing fashion of thought. Judged by its effects on human thinking at least, the work of Karl Marx on Capital is very likely as important in social theory, considered as an intellectual force, as Kant's Critique of the Pure Reason in philosophy or Darwin's Origin of Species in science. While it is easy enough as an exercise in formal logic to pick flaws in the reasoning — as in the theory of "surplus" labor — it is simply impossible to gainsay the import of the conclusions as a whole. Moreover let the churchman inform himself of the fact that some objections to socialism are out of date. Socialism is not atheistic, for example, though many socialists are atheistic or agnostic. The doctrines of socialism do not imply atheism any more than the doctrine of evolution implies atheism. The presence of atheists in socialistic circles

tells no more against socialism than does the presence of atheists in scientific circles tell against science. Again, socialism is not anarchistic. It aims at the very largest social control. Still again socialism itself does not preach immorality. Instead of attacking the family it really aims at putting the family on a more stable basis. Nor is the Hibernian philosopher who protested against the immorality of socialism on the ground that it meant that his pigless neighbors might come and divide his pigs among themselves to be taken as the last authority on the subject. Those who raise the above objections reveal at once that they have not kept pace with socialistic discussion.

Socialism fundamentally aims at securing for society as a whole the material results which the individual does not himself earn but which now come to him unearned through the very fact that he lives in society. Inasmuch as society creates such values society should have control over them. Hence a direct attack on rent, interest and profits. Through the laws of inheritance such accumulations of property are handed down from generation to generation — placed in the hands of the inheritors unearned. The possession of capital gives the possessors enormous power in society with no other real claim than the fact of possession itself. But the situation becomes most serious when we ask what capital really is. In the last analysis it is so largely the tools of production that the working classes, with no

title to the tools with which they work, are dependent on the owners of the tools to a degree which is undemocratic and anti-social.

The Dogmatism of Socialism

A democratic Church will come to all such discussions as this with insistence upon the human values. The problem raised by socialism is real and must be solved. The criticism which a democratic churchman might justly raise against socialism is its tendency to absolutism. The day of the absolutes in any realm — economics included — is about over. The question is always as to what is best for the human values — and such a question must be relative. Just as the Manchester School of the last century succeeded in fastening upon economic thought a set of propositions as to laws of supply and demand and kindred matters which presently took on the character of absolute orthodoxy — to be worshiped without regard to the human outcomes — so socialism, in spite of its various forms — shows like dogmatic tendencies. It deals in self-evident certainties which are not sun-clear when closely examined. As an illustration, while most socialists to-day would concede that any man is entitled to all he earns — the full product of his labor in other words — no matter if that should prove to be ten or a hundred or a thousand times as much as another man receives, every socialist would declaim against such a man's

receiving interest for any of his surplus lent to another — the reason being that "interest is the tribute that ignorance renders to avarice." Or stripped of the language of the soap-box, interest cannot be a payment for service rendered. But is this so transparently clear, after all? Granted that the theories of interest are not satisfactory — it will be remembered how Marx made sport of paying interest for the "abstinence" of the rich man who refrains from spending all his money — still is not the accumulation of money into considerable sums a public service? We pretend to no authority in this sphere — we merely ask the question to suggest that a socialistic dogma may not be self-evident.

The same tendency to absolutism appears in much denunciation of capitalists as intentional wrong-doers. Marx himself kept clear of this. He saw capitalism as an inevitable stage in economic progress, and rather welcomed its running its full length. But some of his followers have made capitalism absolutely evil. They can be pardoned for this when we think of it all as re-action against the wild stuff which capitalists have hurled against socialism; but such dogmatism does not conduce to progress. The truth is that many capitalists are convinced of the inequalities of the present economic system and are using their means to bring in a better day. If we are to have orderly progress in vast human societies we shall have to learn to respect the human value even of an opponent in a debate. To

achieve this is sometimes quite a moral feat, but it will help to remember that in social ethics very few courses are absolutely right or wrong. Some things are right at one time and wrong at another. Those transition eras when a course which has had its day of being right is passing over into something wrong make heavy demands upon the human stocks of reasonableness and charity.

One further mark of the absolute character of present day socialism — or of the socialism of late yesterday — was the assumption of many of its leaders that it could be established in America without any particular relation to the demands of the distinctively American Environment. The hands have been those of the universal friend of mankind, but the voice has at times had an unpleasantly distinctive and particular foreign accent. Moreover there has been a regimenting of the minds of the political socialists into a sort of intellectual goose-step — an exclusion of dissenters — a high-handed censoriousness at legitimate criticism. Industrial and ecclesiastical and political forms of life distinctively American have been attacked as if they were European. The result has been that the attack has sometimes fallen on evils of secondary importance while the more consequential faults escaped. Socialism henceforth is not likely to accomplish much in this country as a formal organization until it adjusts itself to American life.

The British Labor Party

Meantime in the march toward larger democracy the Church is more likely to sympathize with such movements as that of the British Labor Party. If we were to try to account for the wide spread of the British doctrines through these days of war, as compared with formal socialism, we would probably find one element of strength to be in the greater humanness of the British Labor Party's platform and methods. The Party is just as radical — at least in the implications of its platforms — as is organized socialism itself. It raises the ominous question as to whether political democracy and industrial autocracy can long continue to exist side by side. But the Labor Party does not allow the emphasis to get on the narrowly economic factors; it conceives of society too in larger terms; it recognizes the interlacings of manifold complexities; it seems to welcome light from whatever quarter and thinkers from whatever walks of life. Logic does not seem to be everything, and there is in the very human character of the discussions a sort of pledge that nothing worth while will be ruthlessly cast away. Industrial democracy, self-control in the various industries, the nationalization of monopoly value resources — these all are approached from the point of view not of the doctrinaire, but from that of the practical worker and citizen anxious to know how to make a rational and sensible beginning at the new without tearing out too much of the old.

Above all it is proceeding on the common sense assumption that the way to cure social evils like militarism especially is to get at their root causes. Incidentally it is comforting to learn that so many of the leaders of the British movement are active Christian churchmen.

The duty of the Church toward forward social movements ought to be, as we have said, to hold on high the human ideals so that all men can see them — or rather so that no men can miss seeing them. Except where an issue affecting human welfare is clearly involved she need not feel called upon to enter into the details of social reorganization. Hers is the realm of ideals and of atmospheres. Complaint was once lodged against a religious denomination at work in Mexico that it " fostered revolutions." Examination showed that no church of the denomination had ever had a preacher or teacher who had preached or taught revolution. All that was left was to complain that " the very atmosphere of the denomination somehow makes for revolution " — as has been true of Christianity from the beginning where human rights have been involved.

The " Pure " Gospel

If all this emphasis on the human seems to encourage the Church toward " mere humanitarianism " we must urge that we have already tried to show that the idea of God is to condition democratic

progress; and if the discussion seems to have drifted away from that "pure gospel" which is the aim of all Christian preaching the reply must be that a careful reading will show that there is nothing "purer" about the Gospel as it has reached us than the primacy which Jesus gave to the rights of men as men. Moreover, while Christianity has no cause to inveigh against wealth as a means, both the Old and New Testaments never lose sight of the fact that the material things are the chief block to spiritual things. The attitude of Jesus toward money and men is forever set before us in the story of the rich young man who would seek light from him. There was the utmost kindness toward the man himself. In the midst of great possessions he had lived a correct life and had become a character so worthy that Jesus felt his heart go out to him with affectionate interest. There was no railing at his wealth. Wealth had its place in the world. But its place was not in the possession of that particular young man. The Kingdom was to be first. Imagine the consternation of some twentieth century disciples if they had heard the command to sell all! They would have thought the young seeker was being too harshly dealt with. It would have been so fine to hold him for at least associate membership, with an eye to possible endowment of the School of the Disciples!

The Church as an Investor

Is there danger that the Church will become a hindrance to social progress through possible subserviency to money powers? Those with most right to an opinion at this point avow that there is not great danger from rich members as such. Rich men are not so averse to hearing the perils of wealth set forth as is sometimes imagined. The Protestant Episcopal Church in America contains an unusually large proportion of wealthy members, but no church in America grants a larger measure of freedom to its priests and bishops in the advocacy of social radicalism. The actual danger is in the accumulation of large church funds to be invested for endowment purposes. Under the present system there is no other way than to make some such investments; but let the investments be made with a full realization that they tend to slow down the prophetic radicalism of the Church. And in every case the investments should be what Vida Scudder calls "white" and should be always made in the light of entire publicity. If the Church herself finds it necessary to conduct business enterprises she should do so with an eye to the largest possible humanization of industry, without too much regard to "efficiency" and "conservative management." The conduct of the Church as an employer of labor will be severely scrutinized in the days just ahead of us.

The Church and Internationalism

We come finally to the attitude of the Church toward the significance of internationalism for democratic progress. The great war has pretty thoroughly taught that the whole world must come avowedly within the sweep of the democratic movement if there is to be democracy anywhere. Democracy must become world-wide, or the nations must take to armament as never before. We can contemplate this latter course only with horror. If there is to be another war on a large scale civilization may as well give itself up for lost. Remember that some of the deadliest weapons of this war — air craft, for example — are still in the experimental stage, and we can only shudder at what is in store for us if the next twenty-five or fifty years are to see a continuance of the race for engines of destruction.

What can the Church contribute toward the new international spirit which we all trust will lead to the formation of a real league of nations? What but an insistence on the simple truth that in dealing with other nations — the backward as well as the forward nations —we are dealing with human beings, who have an elementary human right to be treated in a human manner. This sounds very commonplace, but this human course has not to any great extent been exalted as an ideal in international relationships. Individual statesmen have indeed

here and there tried to keep the human considerations uppermost, but they have not been able to count on a Christianized and humanized international public sentiment. The field for the Church here is new, but it is open to successful cultivation.

The first step forward which such a humanization of international sentiment would compel us to take would be to develop a larger appreciation of the peoples of the other nations as such, and a greater modesty in our thought of our own nation. This does not mean that a man is to be a de-nationalized internationalist. Very likely a true internationalism — with emphasis on the abiding human values — will make the Christian more patriotic than before — with a holy resolve to shape his own nation into a better instrument for the benefit of world-wide humanity. The advice of the Master to his disciples in their relations one to another is good for the citizens of various countries in international contacts: " Have salt in yourselves and have peace with one another." Salt is positive: but a salty patriotism — strong and vigorous — is compatible with international peace. Those who scoff at internationalism would of course have the passage read that only those with some saccharine substance in themselves could hope for international peace.

Mutual Respect Among Nations

The Christian statesman who moves for the humanization of international relationships may be

advancing into new territory, but he may well remember that his religion has from the beginning called for just such statesmanship. If we may be permitted just one Scriptural illustration we may refer to the Book of Jonah as an outstanding tract on internationalism. The theme is curiously modern — a patriot so convinced of the superiority of his own nation as to despise all other nations — a patriot so full of the thought of God's exclusive absorption with Jewish affairs that he fancies he can escape a repulsive command to preach to Nineveh by sailing for Tarshish out of God's sight — a patriot more eager to be thrown over in a storm at sea than to surrender to the behest to preach to Nineveh — a patriot disgusted with his own success in calling the people of an outside nation to repentance — a patriot finally quarreling with God over the changed plan that lifts the Ninevites into the light of divine favor. Jonah is to be found in every nation — the trouble with Germany seems to be that he is in the majority — and the problem of internationalism is partly that of the education and expansion and Christianization of Jonah. A celebrated traveler and internationalist was once asked as to the next step in doing away with the possibilities of war between nations. He replied that such a step would be the prevention of newspaper cartoonists from dealing with international subjects. The indispensable requisite for international good feeling is mutual respect. When we come to the

vexed enigma as to how to deal with the so-called less-favored nations we may well welcome any course of events which leads to larger self-respect on the part of such peoples. Certain types of imperialists are crying out to-day against the extent to which dwellers in the non-Christian nations are "speaking up" in behalf of their own rights. It augurs well for democracy that these peoples are speaking up and that their voice is being heard. England — the wisest colonizer the world ever has seen — shows her wisdom in nothing more than in her readiness to hearken to the cry of any of her subject peoples for steps toward self-government.

A missionary — now a leader in a great denomination — was once standing on a street-corner in an Indian city when a native boy came down the street selling cups of tea. A foreigner called for tea a number of times but the boy did not hear. Whereupon the foreigner rushed upon the boy, struck the tray with his stick, breaking the cups. The boy promptly knocked his assailant down. And a vast scandal seemed likely to ensue — due partly to the fact that inquiry revealed that the boy had learned boxing at a mission school and that the missionary by-stander had shown his sympathy by paying for the cups of tea.

But did this boy from the mission school show a good type of Christianity in thus striking? Possibly not: but he did manifest a rather superior grade of heathenism. The type of Christianity which acts

as if the non-Christian nations had no rights which the Christian nations are bound to respect is fast passing. The course of the present war is hastening the passing. Anyone who has been up and down back of the battle-lines in France has seen Indian and Senegalese soldiers and Chinese laborers by scores of thousands standing together in defense of Christian civilization. Out of it all is coming a respect for peoples of India and China and Africa which is not likely soon to fade away. And for the cause of Christian democracy this respect is all clear gain. The Hindu who has fought as bravely as the English Tommy for England's cause finds a new respect in the Englishman's regard. Just as the negro who has fought as bravely as the white American for America's cause can expect — and will receive — a new respect from America. Out of the respect in both cases new political rights are sure to come. An Indian soldier on the English front got drunk on a day of leave. Stung by the reproaches of his comrades, as they deplored the blemish on their record as a " fit " unit, the poor Indian said that if they would say no more he would himself " make it right." When he next was ordered to the front-line trench he went over the top alone — and fell. Not an expiation that the Tommy would have been likely to think of — but one which captured his respect nevertheless. Anyone who has heard the United States negro soldiers sing in the camps the old camp-meeting melody: " I'se a-goin'

down to the edge of Jordan, one of these days," and then realizes their surpassing bravery in battle, will likely be willing to vote that they and their children and their fellows shall have a large share in that Promised Land to which we trust the war will bring us.

Two Gainers in Every Trade

It seems to be in the economic realm that the real difficulty lies when we strive for international good-will. But here again the emphasis of the Church on the right of way of the human interests ought to play a decisive part. We do not wish to appear to be talking utter commonplace, but the adequate comprehension of the plain ethical requirement that there should be two gainers by every trade would do away with much friction in international relationships. This doctrine is not of itself very revolutionary, but a serious attempt always to think of foreign nations as entitled on a simple human basis to be fairly dealt with in trade would go some distance toward doing away with the causes of war. For if a nation thinks of itself as likely to be put upon in trade it arms itself. And the international situation becomes just as intolerable as if the buyers and sellers at a city market had to act on the assumption that they would not get fair dealing unless they each carried a gun. This treatment may seem to err on the side of over-

simplicity but the fundamental consideration is sound.

The acute dangers, of course, come with the fear of each nation that it will not get its fair share of the world's raw materials. Hence the feverish anxiety as to coal and iron deposits, areas of rubber growth, and other natural riches in the so-called backward countries. On the merely material side this problem is so important as to call for the formation of a League of Nations. Granted any sense of international honor it ought to be possible to come to a measurably satisfactory agreement. The railroads in this country existed in a state of perpetual war with one another as long as each was aiming at its own advantage merely. When by one device or another they arrived at practical division of territory and opportunities the fighting ceased, and a larger prosperity for each resulted. There does not seem to be anything inherently impossible in a similar arrangement between nations as to the great sources of raw materials.

Backward Countries

But here we come to the fact that the lands of great natural resources which the nations covet are already occupied by the so-called backward peoples and one of the most complicated and baffling questions for the Christian internationalist immediately arises. Again, however, a resolute determination

to keep the human values in the foreground is all-important. We are perfectly willing to heed the advice of the "practical" statesman to look at things as they are: and we urge therefore that all questions as to whether we would have had a half-million Red Indians permanently own the land which is now the United States are hardly practical. There is such a thing as Humanity's Right of Eminent Domain: this world belongs by right to those who can make the best use of it for the human interests. It would not have been just for any half-million persons — red or white — to hold permanent possession of America: though this does not say that the Indian was fairly treated — nor does it really say anything that quite hits the mark. To dispossess a comparatively few savages from monopolizing riches capable of nourishing half a world is one thing: to tolerate the exploitation of natural resources of lands inhabited — as in China — by two hundred millions of human beings is quite another. Or to take an illustration nearer home suppose we look at Mexico. The author of this booklet has for part of his official duty the frequent visitation of missionary enterprises in Mexico. Nobody is eager to deny that Mexico has been in a bad way since the recent revolutions set in, or to affirm that her plight can never be so bad as to warrant intervention. It is conceivable that the human interests involved may some day necessitate intervention, but intervention will be a terrible price to pay for the ad-

vantages gained. The deepening of mutual suspicion that would result, the tightened hold of financial forces from outside of Mexico, the set-back to processes of Christianization would be part of the cost. A military expert called to testify before a United States Senate Committee on some matters connected with the war is reported to have exclaimed: "Does anybody think that if we want the oil wells at Tampico to help the cause of the Allies we will not take them?" If the expert really spoke thus his place is not with the Allies — no matter how intense his feeling of personal loyalty to the Allied Cause. His place is with the Prussian staff. There are fifteen millions of people in Mexico, and they have first claim on the resources of their own country.

Obsolescent International Doctrines

From the point of view of human welfare in the large there are two items in the creed of international conduct which will one day have to be set aside. One is the insistence upon "concessions," of a material sort, granted by the weaker nation to the more powerful nation, or nations. A concession of this sort is the open door to the corruption of a weaker nation's officials and the pauperization of the nation itself. The second item is the accepted doctrine that a citizen who goes into a backward country for commercial purposes has a right to call

on his home government for the protection of his material interests. To a certain measure of personal protection such a citizen is no doubt entitled, but the world will one day have to turn squarely around on the idea that fleets and armies can be legitimately used for the safe-guarding of speculative business ventures in foreign lands. Some claims that have been recently advanced in harmony with the current doctrine are about as reasonable as it would be for a balloonist, bent on attempting a flight across the Atlantic for a money prize, to insist that the United States send along part of the navy to pick him up in case of wreck. On moral grounds the aerial adventurer would have a better case than the commercial adventurer: since the former's scheme would not call for shooting anybody.

If we can just bring the nations of the earth to the point where each looks upon all the others as organized groups of human beings, and each treats all the others with the human rights uppermost we shall not need such extensive reliance on professional diplomatists and militarists. So far as the lay outsider can judge there seems to be something about the very atmosphere and technique and etiquette of formal diplomacy that makes away from plain dealing. When the elder Pitt came to the premiership of England it was the custom for the premier to remain kneeling in the presence of the sovereign during the discussion of state affairs. Pitt refused to continue the practice, avowing that nobody could

talk in straight man-to-man fashion in such a posture. Similarly the observance of etiquette seems to thwart the getting at the whole truth — or at least the getting the truth to the world — through diplomatic utterances. Let us reflect occasionally on the fact that the majority of persons called on to fight in the world-war in 1914 probably did not know the real causes of the war till after the fighting had begun! In diplomacy it is especially true that yea should be yea and nay, nay. Whatsoever is more than this is likely to come of evil.

Justifiable War

Unfortunately, in to-day's organization of nations, a final appeal to force is sometimes necessary. We can be thankful that the present war is likely to burn some reasons for war into ashes. Wars of conquest, for conquest's own sake, or for the spread of an idea — are over, let us trust. There remains the use of force as a part of an international police system — but the result of such force is primarily restrictive. It keeps down the evil that good may get a chance. Even in a league of nations it might be possible for a nation to go wrong, and yield only to the sway of force. While it may not be possible — as Burke has told us — to bring an indictment against a whole people it is necessary to remember that a whole people may be obsessed with an insane idea and may

start forth to put that idea on the world by force. It is possible for a community to be composed of persons every one of whom may be individually sane — or sane in his individual conduct — and yet for the community to be socially insane. If now such a community gets hold of the immense destructive agencies of modern science and begins to run wild there is nothing left but to restrain the community. By all means let us preach in favor of the piling up of armaments, if this running amuck is the social possibility? By no means. Granted that we must have armament enough for international police purposes let us remember that the race for armament itself is one of the crazes which sometimes sets a national mind off its balance. Meantime the Church will continue to protest that the doctrine that war itself is a good, or that nations need wars as a moral tonic, or that war is a means for the advancement of civilization in any but a merely negative sense, is little short of blasphemy. The most justifiable war is the war which means the doing away with war. A belligerent ecclesiastic once urged a war on a non-Christian people because one of its results would be the opening of doors to Christianity. A clear-sighted Christian thereupon rejoined that in the light of this proposal it would be well to amend a great Scriptural passage and make it read: "Go ye into all the world and shoot the Gospel into every creature."

The Missionary as an International Force

It is of course in the realm of direct missionary endeavor that the Church is making its best contribution to the solution of the international problem. The first good sign is that the missionaries who work directly with the natives of a non-Christian country are becoming more and more "pro" the people with whom they work. They seem to be giving themselves more and more to a patiently acquired understanding of the minds to whom they are sent to preach. We are not speaking now of pastors of English-speaking churches in foreign lands. They are apt to reflect just the point of view of the foreign dweller in a non-Christian land and to understand the people not at all. But real missionaries are doing an increasingly important work in interpreting the mind of non-Christian peoples to Christian peoples. The first requisite in all such relationships is mutual understanding.

Another good sign is the disappearance of the paternalistic, almost patronizing spirit in the relation of missionaries to their charges. We have repeatedly said that there can be no real uplift of the world toward Christian democracy except on a basis of mutual respect all-around. The view of the heathen as a poor fellow to be approached with pity is of course measurably just, but the "poor fellow" has capabilities which need only a chance to flower out. The missionary is now-a-days among the first to

recognize that the very peculiarities of different peoples ought to be preserved for their expression in religious form. And certainly the great religious talent of some nations will get its only adequate opportunity through the coming of Christianity. Loyalty to Christ may show itself in multiform ways. The interpretation of Christ will be enriched if the Church persists in its present wise attitude of encouraging native converts to genuine self-expression.

This wholesome respect for the native convert will carry us far. It will lead more and more to a policy of local self-government by native Christians in their own churches. It will even be willing to sacrifice the greater efficiency that might come with outside missionary leadership for the sake of letting the natives profit by their own blunders in democratic experiment. For the sake of world-wide democracy we may well rejoice that the Church "at home" is keeping closer and closer control on the great missionary boards. Just as the foreign policy of a nation will inevitably tend away from democracy if it is left to Colonial Boards and Foreign Secretaries, so the Missionary policy of a Church will slip toward an insidious church imperialism if the Church itself does not watch and control. The reason is partly that any kind of democratic experiment is costly and apt to "muss things up." It does not lend itself to that neat statistical tabulation which is such a joy to the official mind. But this

is true of all matters of the spirit. Yet it is matters of the spirit that the Church is most deeply concerned with.

The World-Wide Church

We have mentioned the movement toward Christian Federalism — the tendency toward self-government for groups with local interests and for action through federation upon those large matters which require the unified energy of the whole Church. This is wonderfully attractive as a missionary conception — the vision of each kindred and people and tongue worshiping God in its own way, and yet all standing together as one Body before the throne. This is better than the idea of a national Church, for example, but it is already being misused by some who think they see in it a way to reconcile the color-line with Christianity. Let the Christians of different colors conduct their affairs in their own way, meeting together only for the causes which call for the decision of the whole mass. Then each race would have a chance in a thoroughly Christian sense to "mind its own business." Some leaders think the plan especially ideal as a solution of the relation of whites and blacks in America. If "minding one's own business," excellent as the virtue is, means deliberate curtailment of the opportunities of Christian fellowship and counsel between races it is not ideal. The native

Christian in a non-Christian land needs to see the life of an American or European who is so fed by inner forces that he does not fall into the vices of his tourist and trader fellow-countryman — who is not tied up with financial schemes — who is not always running to the embassy of his nation for reënforcement and protection. Missionaries have remained in Mexico, for instance, during all the revolutions without clamoring to Washington for help. As to the black man — he is especially open to example and counsel. And the missionary for his own soul's good and the good of the Kingdom of God needs to see at close range the apostolic fervor, the freshness of insight, the trials and victories of his brother lately won to Christianity. The long traditions back of the missionary aid the convert in a right start: and the convert's joy in a spiritual discovery helps the missionary against the tendency to "go stale."

It all comes in the end to treating human beings as human beings. Bishop Walter Lambuth, one of the greatest of African missionaries, on one of two trips through equatorial Africa which together meant five-thousand miles of travel on foot, found himself without food in the dense forests of the Upper Congo region. He thought there was no hope for him but determined to walk along the path as long as his strength would permit, rather than to yield and sink down. At a crossing of the paths a native met him with food. At the next crossing of

the paths a second native stood with food, and Bishop Lambuth asked the reason. The reply was: "Have you not heard the beating of the drums?" It appears that the natives of that region have a method of communicating with one another, by beating with mallets upon resonant wooden blocks. The sound can be heard three miles in a forest and much farther along a river course; and is caught up and relayed by other drummers to a great distance. An agreed-upon signal tells when a friend is in the forest without food and relief must be rushed to him. Bishop Lambuth's whole policy in dealing with native Africans is to treat them as human beings. He always redeems his word with them — and always places his medical skill — for he is a surgeon — at the disposal of any whom he can help. In return they used for him their most ingenious and skillful resource. The incident is literally true but it is also a prophetic allegory.

A Warning

We come to the close of the discussion of the way the Church can help make the world safe for democracy with the picture of a world-wide church before our minds. The final word should be one of warning. Democracy is not necessarily and inherently and irresistibly a good thing in itself. Nor are the leaders that rise rung by rung from the lowest conditions to the highest places always the best. Some-

times they are the worst — least loyal to the interests of the mass. Democracy is a great adventure made necessary by the failure of other systems to achieve the good men feel they have a right to expect. If it means that the various organizations of the world are just to change masters, without regard to the ideals which animate the masters, the change will lead to another of the long score of disappointments in the world's search for ways and means to move on and up. The ideal that now floats before men's minds has a religious, almost a mystical quality. It is the business of the Church to keep the ideal finely religious and ethical. To do that she must keep herself and her ministers in the prophetic mood — a mood which will not only interpret the Church to herself, but at whatever cost hold before her the ideals without which Democracy — as a mere scheme of control — would not be worth while. Democracy will not be worth while if it develops into a colossal agency for smothering the voices of the prophets. The tolerance which Democracy shows for those who rebuke her faults will be an indication of her worthiness to endure. Democracy has her kings also — the individuals in whom the spirit that is best in Democracy comes to personal expression. And it is the function of the Church to help Democracy discover and crown her kings.

IV

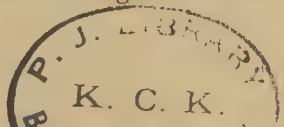
PREACHING TO SOLDIERS

DURING the past year and a half the United States has taken over three million young men out of civil life and has put them under army training. At the date of writing (October 11, 1918) over two million of these men are in military service in France. It is the merest commonplace that the return of the soldiers to civil life will be of the greatest significance for the political life of American Democracy. We can get a hint of what is to happen if we glance at the course of United States history for the thirty-five years immediately following the Civil War. Every President from Abraham Lincoln's second term to William McKinley's second term had been in some way connected with the Civil War except Grover Cleveland. Andrew Johnson was a military governor, Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Harrison had reached the rank of general. McKinley had been a major. The Civil War was a stern educative process, which for good or ill, marked the life of the generation which was just coming to early maturity in the years from '61 to '65. As it was in politics so also it was in industry. The captains of the military forces became captains

of industry. To their trained energy was due in large part the conquest of the West and the other economic victories of the half-century following the war.

Similar results — though probably on a vaster scale — are likely to follow the return of the soldiers after the Great War. The larger significance in the results will come from the greater number of soldiers — a number so large that it will affect every corner of our democracy; and from the further fact that definitely radical political and social theories are now more a part of the soldier's intellectual atmosphere than at the close of our Civil War. The question is being raised with especial frequency as to what the effect of the returning soldier is likely to be on the religious life of our time. To safeguard the religious and moral life of the soldier the religious elements of American Democracy have put forth effort on an enormous scale. Nothing of the kind has ever before been dreamed of in the history of the world. The support of the Y. M. C. A. and similar organizations, as well as the work of the organizations themselves, is beyond all praise.

The author of this book spent several months in 1917-1918 speaking to American soldiers in America and to American and British soldiers in France. He hazards a few guesses as to the kind of religious problem the returning soldier will create. What will be the effect of his presence in a democracy professedly aiming at the spread of the Kingdom of God?



Soldiers and Militarism

To begin with, the returning soldier is not likely to foster in the nation a spirit of militarism. The critics of democracies have always cried: "Wait till the man on horseback comes, and the republic will go down in a dictatorship." The man on horseback has repeatedly come in American history and after his greatest victories he has said: "Let us have peace." It will be so again. Let there be no mistake as to the spirit of the American soldier in France. He is a hard fighter. He fights for a decision. He sees clearly the issues at stake and if his will is heeded will not stop till the victory is so complete that neither he nor his children will have to be called out to do this work again. But there is no glory about the modern processes of war themselves. The glory is in the motive that makes it possible for men to endure mud and rain and lice and rats. The soldier's first desire is to get the victory over militarism decisively won. His second desire is to get back home. The reactionary politicians who are telling the American public to-day what we must do in the way of providing a mighty army and navy hereafter to "keep faith with our boys" ought to make a trip or two to an advanced dug-out and hear what "the boys" say. If I may use the personal pronoun, I once asked one of the most courageous men on the British front — a man who had by common consent proved himself sur-

prisingly brave in three years of war — where the English militarists were — the soldiers glorying in war and always straining at the leash to get at the throat of the enemy, rushing to the fray with a light heart. He replied that the only ones he knew were "back at home making speeches in the prayer-meetings." This same man once took me into the little cemetery at Bapaume to show me why the Allies were fighting. In the cemetery stands — or stood, for the ground has been fought over twice since — a simple cross some twenty feet high, over the graves of a score or so of French soldiers fallen in the war of 1870. In the great on-rush of 1914 the Germans had taken possession of the cemetery and buried a number of their own dead there. Within fifty feet of the French monument they had erected a monument of their own — a block of stone — on its top the representation of a cannon-ball — at its base more symbolic cannon-balls — on its face, over against the cross of the French graves — the iron cross of Germany. My guide quietly remarked: "We intend to fight on until militarism repents of putting the iron cross over against the Cross of Christ." It would not be just, however, to represent the soldier's hostility to war as just a hostility to Prussian militarism. The question, especially with the British Tommies, goes much deeper. With the fight on, the soldiers of all the allied armies are willing to fight to the end — no matter how bitter it may be. But very often they ask as to the causes of

the war — not just the series of facts in July, 1914, but the features of national and international life which create the tendency to war. They say they will continue to ask that question with insistence after the war. "This must never be allowed to happen again," is the way they put it. And the soldier who has fought Prussianism in its poisonous fruit on the battle-field is not going to be at all delicate in his handling of the seeds of Prussianism in the social order. It requires only an elementary intelligence to perceive that the war against war is not over till modern social conditions are sterilized against the seeds of war — and Tommy's intelligence is far, far above the elementary.

Exhausted Listeners

Certain habits of mind are begotten by the routine of the military life which present problems for him who speaks on religious truth not unlike those presented by any situation of over-strain. A father recently wrote urging his son in a French battle-line to hold fast the thought of God in the days of peril. The son replied that it was impossible. He declared that he had lost none of the faith in which he had been schooled — but as for thinking about God — or anything else except just the next thing — it was simply out of the question. He was too tired — "all in." But there are speakers who can win and hold

the attention of just such men — speakers of straightforward earnestness and manifest sincerity.

The training which many speakers are receiving in the huts just back of the lines in France is bound to be of benefit for the Christian cause when the war is over. Direct simplicity will be valued as never before. This — and utter sincerity. The soldier — especially when he is tired, with the weariness which makes for quick irritability — wants straightforward dealing. If he is asked to come to a picture-show he wants to see a picture-show. If a concert is advertised he wants a concert — and not a " sacred " concert unless that is what is announced. He will come to a straight preaching service, if that is what he is asked to attend. But if prayers are " sprung " at the close of a picture-show he may get up and go out — as he ought. The converse of this is also true, that when he comes to an advertised " open and above-board " religious service he will give respectful attention without the speaker's feeling that he must make his address " entertaining." In dealing with situations of this sort the homiletic proficiency of many preachers is improved. Nothing compels attention in the end more surely — even for jaded listeners — than downright earnestness and genuineness. It is safe to predict that American preaching will show an enlarged effectiveness after the war.

All in the Day's Work

A second type of mood to which the soldier is liable comes out of over-emphasizing that "it is all in the day's work." The excellent merits of this practical doctrine are at once to be recognized. It is wholesome advice to tell men to take things as they come: but the advice can be overdone. It may lead in the end to ignoring the large issues of the daily life. In one sense it is not the duty of the soldier to concern himself with the large strategy of the campaign, but in another sense it is highly important that he hold always at least in the background of his thought the goal toward which his army and nation move. Even in strictly military matters the largest leadership thus far developed in this war — that of Marshal Foch — insists that discipline in the supreme sense is not merely doing what one is told, but in seizing as a controlling aim the underlying thought of the whole war program. Here again the speaker or teacher who has power in directing men's thoughts out beyond the day's work to the years' and life's meanings renders marked service to his soldier audiences and will render fine service to democracy in the days to come. For men in masses are prone to forget the issues of the years in absorption with the issues of the days. It is only half true that if soldiers and citizens look after the days the years will take care of themselves. The other half of the truth is that if men take the

long look at the years the days will take care of themselves.

Fatalism

A third characteristic of the soldier's mind is clearly pronounced — perhaps most clearly pronounced of all — the tendency to fatalism. It is useless to protest against this — something more than protest is in order. For experience in war begets fatalism almost inevitably. And the results in a military sense are not all bad. When one soldier gets the conviction that he is to be killed whether or no and then goes forth with the resolve to sell his life as dearly as possible, when another feels that his luck will carry him through anything, and acts victoriously on the assumption, when another believes that if the "bullet has his number on it there is no use of dodging" and becomes unbelievably cool under fire the military virtues of fatalism become apparent. And there is so much in war to suggest fatalism. A soldier goes through five charges over the top without a scratch, and dies of a chance wound back in a rest billet. In the long run, of course, fatalism is harmful — even from the military point of view. The soldier who is convinced that he will not get out of the war alive may take to brooding or to drink. He who believes always in luck goes to pieces when the luck suddenly gives out. He who relies upon the freakishness of fate's decrees ceases to take proper precaution.

There is a way of dealing with all this which is thoroughly Christian and increasingly effective. More and more there is being preached among soldiers the Gospel that lays stress on devotion to a cause, without over-much anxiety as to one's individual fate. In spite of all I have just said men in war do think about religion; and when they do their minds move directly to the question of God and the meaning of His plans for the world. The shrewd observers here at home who predict that after this war men will think of religion just in terms of gifts of coffee and chocolate and "a chance to write a letter" are as superficial as the merely shrewd always are. In spite of weariness and indifference and fatalism in battle-lines and war-camps thousands upon thousands of the brightest minds of the younger generation are inwardly asking the fundamental questions about God. In one of the recent engagements a signal officer, at work adjusting a wire in a tree, lost his grasp and fell into a puddle of mud. He was for the moment too much jarred to rise quickly and had to take time to catch his breath. As he lay there on his back, with shrapnel bursting just overhead, it all struck him as "funny"— first his own plight and then the plight of the universe in which such a war could occur. The question came to him: "What kind of God is it — if there is a God — that can be mixed up in a mess like this?" The significance of the question was double. It was the first question the man had

ever really asked about God; and the question was not the last, for the youthful mind started there on a quest for a satisfying idea of God. This experience was revealed in a confidential intimacy to a Y. M. C. A. secretary, for men in war are as reticent as men in peace about inner experiences. And the story — with its youthful unconventionality of expression and its genuineness of feeling — is typical of the inner pilgrimages of many a mind in France. But in a war in which men are taught to count personal safety as nothing, the curiosity as to personal individual welfare seems not to count heavily in soldier thinking of religion. Death itself becomes common-place through familiarity. So far as the individual's fate is concerned the soldier's religion issues it a conviction that " it is all right," no matter what happens. If God is like Christ why worry? This is the sum and substance of many a soldier's theology. More and more the men respond to the idea that if they are working as part of the divine agencies in the world they need not worry as to their personal destiny. So that, living and dying becomes merely incidental if only the cause is advanced.

The Soldier's Religion

This attitude, by the way, explains a misunderstanding into which Christian leaders sometimes fall when they first begin to work with soldiers — they think the soldier indifferent to personal individual

religion — especially as they listen to the roughness of his speech. It is not, however, to be wondered at that a situation which makes so little of the individual as does modern war should not encourage over-concern as to the strictly personal in religion. Before long, however, the discerning worker comes to see that the true soldier's religion takes the form of regard for the "cause." He is open to any interpretation which will help him see the divineness of that cause. There can be no escaping the fact that the conditions of the present struggle make too much away from the personal, individualistic type of piety, though the fervor and enthusiasm of the personal religious "testimonies" in large prayer-meetings held by native Indian Christians just back of the British fighting lines ought to make us slow to pronounce such a type of piety unsuited to war conditions. Still the world in which we are to live after the war will be more and more insistent upon devotion to the large general welfare as the true fruit of the Spirit.

On the evening of Sunday, March 17, 1918, it was the privilege of the writer to conduct religious services with twelve hundred Scottish Guards at Arras. All were awaiting the great German onslaught which broke as a matter of fact on the next Thursday morning — March 21. At the conclusion of the service most devoutly entered into by the soldiers I asked the men themselves to select the final hymn. Instantly a number of voices called for the

same number. The men turned to the hymn and sang it through, and went out — many of them no doubt to meet their death before another Sunday. The impression irresistibly made by the soldiers' singing was that they were identifying themselves and their work with something divine. The hymn was:

> "O God, our help in ages past,
> Our hope for years to come:
> Our shelter in the stormy blast,
> And our eternal home."

THE END

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